

## THE PRIVATE SEANCE

By G. W. Masters

"Business is mighty slow, Prof. Nahum," said Madame Ida the medium, to the latest satellite whom she had picked up in the course of her journeys up and down the length and breadth of the land.

"They might be better," admitted the professor, gloomily.

Madama Ida, driven out of Iowa and at her wits' end, had considered herself fortunate in securing the services of the starving young man who had agreed to work for her on the basis of a division of the receipts instead of on salary. They had had quite a successful tour in Ohio, stopping for a day and a night at the little country villages, where the gullible are just as numerous as they ever were, in spite of education.

"Queer business, ain't it, professor?" soliloquized Madame Ida. "But lord, all business is a graft. It's a respectable one and it don't do no harm and does do a lot of good, that's what I say. At least, it makes some folks think they are seeing the spirits of their beloved dead, and even if they ain't sure that it's true it helps. That's what I say—it helps. Never had no folks of your own, did you, professor?"

"Not since I was a boy," answered the professor gloomily.

"Well, listen now," said Madame Ida. "There's a rich old guy in this place that's crazy on spirits. I got a line on him and I've sent him an advertisement of tonight's meeting. He ought to be good for fifty if we can work him right. Had a son who run away and was wild, or something of the sort, and he's got the idea that he's in the summer land and thinks he didn't treat him square. Work the game for all it's worth tonight, professor."

"Sure," answered the professor.

"Karpen is his name—Henry Karpen, and he's got a mint of money.

We might manage to stay over a few days and perhaps give him private settings. Shrewd old fellow he is, too, they say, in the law. But, lord, that's the kind we catch the easiest. So work him, professor."

"I will," muttered the professor, rising and going into the cabinet, which was set with the accessories for the seance.

Madame Ida had advertised extensively, not through the newspa-



"It's Faith That Counts, You Know."

pers, which was apt to bring down the attentions of the police, but by means of handbills, and by letters addressed to persons whom she had learned through underground channels to be spiritualistically inclined. As a result there was a fairly full house at a dollar apiece, among the audience being old Mr. Karpen. Watching him narrowly out of the corner of her eye Madame Ida decided that the old lawyer could be "worked" as easily as the rest.